7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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bly similar in texture, design, and form to the pottery made now. Just as a man defines himself as an agriculturalist, a woman defines herself as a potter. Men complain if their wives do not produce pottery, and I know of two cases of separation on the grounds that the woman was not fulfilling one of her functions as housewife by helping the family budget with pottery production. Most women like to make pottery: it helps them to pass the day, and they say they would be bored without it. Some of the women who have gone with their husbands for extended stays in hot country have tried to make pottery out of clays available there, but because of its inferior quality, they have not had much success. Unlike women of neighboring towns, the women of Tzo'ontahal usually do not accompany their husbands to the fincas "because they have their work at home."

Making pottery. The women make a wide variety of household and ceremonial objects, but the item which has the widest market distribution is the water storage jar (See Plate 7). They introduce new items in response to local needs, such as the funnel used in channeling liquor into large containers from the retort of the still. One vessel which is disappearing from production is the large ceremonial cooking pot. The only woman who knew how to do this (or who admitted to knowing, since it is unpaid work) died in the 60s, and no one has replaced her. One woman who had a reputation for eccentricity, introduced several elaborate vases and ashtrays. Her creative imagination was best exemplified in a combined ashtray and vase which featured four frogs poised on the lip of the tray, presumably drinking from a fountain. Reina (1962–1963) has pointed out that women of the Guatemalan community of Chinautla who wish to be accepted in the community must limit themselves to conventional forms, and the same restriction seems to apply in Tzo'ontahal.

The women of a household work as a group in collecting clay and in firing pottery. Clay is free since it is found in the communally owned hills on the perimeter of the town. It is collected preferably during the rainy season when it is easier to gather from the open gorges in which it is found, but if the supply runs out, other trips are made. All of the women of the household go, sometimes with neighbors or relatives in groups of five or six. They collect large clay balls weighing from forty to fifty pounds which they carry in a net bag on their backs with a tumpline.

(see plates following p.198..Analyst)

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pounds which they carry in a net bag on their backs with a tumpline. The sand which is mixed with the clay is found nearby. In preparing it for use, the clay has to be chopped with a hatchet and soaked. A temper for cooking pots is made of ground sandstone, called *baš*. This is found near the border of the neighboring town of Aguacatenango, and sometimes Indians of that town bring pieces which they exchange for a soup bowl or other small pottery item.

Variation in the color of the clay—it may be white, white mixed with yellow, true yellow, black, or blue-green—provides the basis for discerning its quality. The white clay is thought to be best since it doesn't break as much in firing. The preferred clay is very soft, and the women test deposits by feeling them with their hands.

The rhythm of work is regular. Children under three years of age climb on their mother's back or lap or sometimes stand by her side nursing. The women do not interrupt their work when this happens, although they may shift their body to accommodate the child. In the organization of work, there is no discussion of what is to be done or who will do it. Orders are given only to the young children. When the women are working, all motions which would require a break in activity are assigned to children who bring unfinished pots to be worked on and shoo away chickens or dogs. The standardization of production rhythm is evidenced in the uniformity in time required for each operation. Timing one potter's production of 10 *apastes* (soup bowls) on two different days, I found that she spent one hour and 10 minutes for each set, an average of 11 minutes per pot. Another woman made a *comal* (platter) in 26 minutes and a second one in 28 minutes. A pair of larger bowls produced by another woman took 15 minutes each.

The continuity in tradition of pottery production stems from a tightly organized behavioral schema with defined units of motion and stages of production. I follow Piaget in his definition of behavioral schema which Flavell (1963:54) has summarized as follows:

> Thus, an action sequence, if it is to constitute a schema, must have a certain cohesiveness and must maintain its identity as a quasi-stable, repeatable unit. It must possess component actions which are tightly

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434 This contrasting economic picture has many effects in the structuring of social relations because it places the women of the two villages in very different positions with respect to their male relatives, and at crucial points in the life of an individual, determines, to a large extent, his choice of alternative behavior.

It is important to make clear that I am not suggesting that economic factors are the determinant of all social life. The specialization of Amatenango in pottery making is not only an economic, but a social and historical phenomenon as well. The basic economic organization of the villages of Amatenango and Aguacatenango is treated here as a given cultural factor. There is nothing in the ecology of Aguacatenango or Amatenango, or in the economic system itself, that "requires" that the women of the one village should be marginal producers while the women in the other are not.[1] This is a given fact. The factors that determined the present division of labor in the villages are not known to me, and I do not pretend that it is due to some primary economic cause.

128 But, if I take the division of labor and the economic structure of the village as given variables, then I can ask myself to what extent it is followed by adjustments in other cultural norms. It is here where my problem lies.

I am going to attempt to describe, in the rest of this work, how, and under what circumstances, certain social choices which have become normative are related to the economic life of

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[1] Some of the clay deposits are located in Aguacatenango territory. But, Aguacatecos do not exploit them.

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